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Clews, Henry

Address by Henry Clews

[S.I.]

[1909?]

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ADDRESS

BY HENRY CLEWS, LL.D.

At the Meeting for the Relief of the Sufferers from
the Earthquake in Italy

HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

THE AMERICAN ITALIAN GENERAL
RELIEF COMMITTEE

AT THE

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, New York
Thursday Evening, Jan. 7, 1909

OTHER ADDRESSES WERE MADE BY

HON. GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, Mayor
HON. CHARLES WARREN FAIRBANKS, Vice-President U. S. A.
THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP GREER
HON. PATRICK F. McGOWAN, Pres. Board of Aldermen
The Italian Consul General at New York
HUDSON MAXIM, Esq.

Address By HENRY CLEWS, LL.D.

At the Meeting for the Relief of the Sufferers from the Earthquake in Italy.
Held under the Auspices of The American Italian General Relief
Committee at the Madison Square Garden, New York.
Thursday Evening, Jan. 7, 1909.

The occasion of our meeting here to-night is indeed a sad one. Yet, were it not that the inspiring cause of this vast assemblage of persons was of so ominous and direful a nature, I would pronounce this a most auspicious as well as a momentous occasion; for it is a spontaneous response of the great and generous American people, and enables them to give expression to their sorrow, and afford relief to their unfortunate fellow-beings, burdened with immeasurable woes and cruel inflictions, and to hold out a brotherly hand to a nation in mourning.

That great bond of human sympathy which holds all mankind together and is ever quick and ready to answer to the call of suffering and distress, is yet quivering with the pangs of horror, agony and despair, coming from over the sea, out from the heart of a sister civilized nation—the echoes of whose cry reverberates from one end of the world to the other,—congealing our very blood in its appalling terror and shocking the world as no calamity has ever done before.

It can be truthfully stated that the recent Italian earthquake, which might verily be called the World's Earthquake, is the most appalling disaster of modern times; and as a student of history, I assert that nothing so terrible in its consequences has occurred since the time of Noah, in the whole history of the world.

No pen can depict nor can language describe the horror of it all—the dead and dying, the tortures of the entombed and starving people—and the terrors of the pestilence following in the wake of this fearful disaster.

I am proud to have been invited here to-night to lend my voice and influence in raising funds for our neighbors across the ocean.

The people of this great city have true cause for thankfulness in that we have been free from earthquake, tornado and tidal wave. The common sorrow over the unparalleled disaster in Italy has made the whole world kin for the time being, and each civilized country on the face of the globe is vying with the others in raising funds for the relief of the suffering.

Let us impress upon all those who have come to our shores that, in time of need America, and particularly New York, always does its duty.

We have in our city so many from the stricken district that it almost seems as if the sufferers were very near to us.

The great strides of progress of the past fifty years and the marvellous speed of communication by ship and rail and the magic of wireless telegraphy and the cable, have brought all nations very close together and have made us, in reality, a family of one common brotherhood of man.

Men are not tied together by any papers or seals! Pulse throbs to pulse, and heart beats to heart, by reason of associations, resemblances, community of interests and manners, as well as our common feelings and, most of all, by the broad bond of human sympathy. These are obligations written in the heart!

Our Creator has designed that we should be united by that sweet and cherished bond of sympathy—especially in and with the distress of others. Be assured, it was never more needed than at this hour!

Hardly had the merry Christmas bells, ringing out the glad tidings of "Peace on earth and goodwill to men," sounded their last welcome peal, than the news flashed over the Atlantic cable that told the story of this great calamity.

That was enough to fire the sympathetic impulse of every American, for in sympathy, we are universal—and let it be either the roar of the turbulent waters of Johnstown or Galveston,—the volcanic death-dealing eruption of Mont Pelée,—the destruction by earthquake and fire of our flourishing city at the Golden Gate,—or the present awful opening of the earth, sounding the fatal doom of entire populous cities, beneath the sunny skies of Italy, near the beautiful waters of the Mediterranean, on whose shores once stood the four great empires of the world—at any time and in every emergency, to the credit of the American people let it be said, that we have never been slow to reach out a helping and never an empty hand.

To-night we are gathered together to do what we can to further the great work of relief. There is no man so high, nor one so low, but that he can do a little something. The widow's mite will be just as acceptable as the rich man's thousands.

Let not the fact that you cannot give largely deter you from giving what you can afford. When we read that hungry men are fighting for stray crusts of bread, every loaf of bread that you can pay for, will have a value over there far beyond the price you pay for it.

The population of the United States is about 90,000,000. One cent contributed by each and every person would mean \$900,000 by popular

subscription. Ten cents for every one would mean the enormous sum of \$9,000,000. Let every one bear this in mind, as it proves that the aggregate of small givings makes a noble monument to charity.

I sincerely believe, my friends, that this American spirit of generosity and virtue of sympathy has drawn down upon our country untold divine blessings. For I know that, like Mercy, the quality of Sympathy

"Is twice blessed.

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

It needs no appeal from me to invoke every aid—immediate aid—from all in this great crisis. Every American—man, woman and child—will each add freely their mite, be it large or small, to so good, so deserving—to so needy a cause.

Our sympathy is freely offered, and rightly so, but just now is the time when money talks. So let us express our sympathy in dollars and not in words, just as Congress had done by its gift of \$800,000.

But let us act at once! "Act, in the living present—Heart within and God o'er head."

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